

and curing ritual, including handling of the shaman's rattle. The bark of the *kuriakü* tree is then prepared in a narcotic drink, also called *kiria*, which teacher and novice take together while singing the shamanistic songs. The instruction period concludes when shaman and novice sit side by side and under the influence of *kiria* sing and shake the rattle from dawn to sunset. At sunset a storm arises and passes quickly. Novice and teacher then go to the river to bathe; they rinse their mouths with water, return to the house, and eat. The novice spends five more days in isolation, repeating the insertions, and then he returns for his examination. He drinks *kiria* and sings until clouds come up. Then the teacher says to him, "Now you understand." He sings some more until the storm breaks, and the examination is over.

Curing is not a highly developed art. The shamans are the first to acknowledge their limitations. They claim only to be able to remove spines (*duwiiyn*) and crystals (*kenádox*) that another shaman has "shot" into the body. A common term for curing is *duvittüwü* (to extract spines). The repertoire of sorcery techniques, not to mention the poisons that sorcerers and malevolent people use, go beyond the assured skills of the curer. Thus there are many ailments which the Indians must be prepared to accept as irremediable. Under the circumstances, the anxious despair into which an ailing Indian falls when ill is readily understood. At the same time, the Cubeo are eager to accept medical treatment for any ailment, regarding such treatment as superior to that offered by the *yavi*.

I witnessed only one full curing treatment which, I was aware, was standard. The patient, an old man who died shortly thereafter, was carried from his hammock and seated on a low stool at the front plaza. The medicine man, who was referred to as *yavi*, a respect term only since he was not credited with the power to be a jaguar, held a rattle hung with parakeet feathers. He asked that two black earthenware pots filled with water be brought to him. He then went off to some bushes, from which he gathered leaves and kneaded them into the water. While doing this he secretly dropped a fistful of black spines into each of the two pots. The spines sank to the bottom. He approached the patient, lighted a long ceremonial cigarette, and blew tobacco smoke at all parts of the body where the ailment might lodge. As he blew the smoke he gestured with his right hand in a motion of waving away breath from his mouth. After each blow he stood up and sent what seemed to be breath and smoke off in the direction of the river and in the direction of the forest. The blowing was accompanied by a shaking of the rattle and was followed by chanted

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at the Isana River. This is so potent that only the smallest amount will kill. The poisoner carries it under the fingernail of his index finger held in place with pitch. He may flick it into a calabash of chicha or drop it on a stool, where it will enter the anus of a victim and kill him within a month. The symptoms are headache, fever, stomach cramps, constipation, and wasting. The following tale accounts for the origin of *pend*. There was a drinking party on the Isana River and the people were dancing with *Bekápwānwa*. Suddenly *Kómi*, a short, fat man, flew into the house on two sticks. He caught a little boy and ate him alive and then another. The people became angry and tried to beat *Kómi* to death with clubs. He said to them, "If you shed my blood you will all die quickly. If you kill me in the house you will all die quickly." *Kómi* told them to take him to a creek called *Mandukanihye*, where they were to build a fire and throw him in. They did this and *Kómi* was reduced to ashes. Every bird and insect that flew near the fire fell into it and was burned. When the fire cooled, a little boy took some bone ash, although his father had warned him not to touch it, and dropped some at the canoe landing. An old man passed over it and immediately fell sick, then another. They tried it on animals and saw it was a good "poison." It comes to the Cuduiari from Arawakan Indians by way of the Querari.

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Curare (*himá*) is known as a powerful poison that may be used only in war and not as a secret potion.

As a far from effective prophylactic against all poisons that may be administered at drinking parties and other group gatherings, the people wear as pendants parkets made of a leaf called *huteádu*, that gives a certain amount of protection against sorcery and poisoning.

The attitude of the Cubeo that human malevolence is difficult if not impossible to guard against must be contrasted with their optimism when it comes to dealing with nonhuman spirit beings. Thus, it will be recalled how the spells and "blowing" against the spirits that threaten the newborn infant can be safely entrusted to any sib elder; he need not possess special powers, only the knowledge. The technique of "blowing" has, oddly enough, full magical efficacy in the hands of the layman but is altogether uncertain when used by a medicine man. The point, of course, is that the layman uses simple magic against a manageable nonhuman adversary, whereas the medicine man is called in to pit himself against a formidable human adversary. The human adversary is formidable in Cubeo eyes for two reasons: it acts out of directed passion and it is devious. The nonhuman spirit world, by contrast, is stirred up to a generalized anger.

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The river anaconda is angered at newborn children and at menstruating women but not at any particular child or woman. The anger of spirits is, finally, direct. Men are always suspected of conspiring, but nonhuman spirits never do.

Finally, Cubeo religion includes a concept of inanimate power, of power resident in substances, places, and personal states of being. I found no articulate Cubeo theory as to inanimate power. *Parikū* is clearly personalized power and *parié* is limited in its applicability to objects intimately associated with the Ancients, the flutes and trumpets in particular. But clearly there is power in pigments, feathers, animal bones, plants, the toenail of the armadillo (which the medicine man uses to bring rain), human hair, leg ligatures, and a host of ceremonial objects. With respect to these substances it is clear that we are dealing with assorted beliefs and practices that are both old and widespread throughout the tropical forests of South America, not to mention beliefs that are close to universal.

Genipa (*ver*) is the most potent pigment. It is applied to the hands and feet as gloves and socks and is run coarsely down the back to create a deliberately crude covering rather than a design. The Cubeo are sensitive to neatly executed designs and normally take great pains with body painting, using special sticks as well as die rollers to stamp a design. The crudeness of genipa painting is to differentiate it from body decoration and to emphasize its purely magical character. Men do use genipa paint, but it is primarily a protective pigment for women and children. A menstruating woman will always coat her back with genipa as a safeguard against animal spirits. She will coat her hands with it when handling sacred substances such as coca and tobacco. Applied to infants, genipa wards off influences that might impede growth. Women say only that genipa is good for the skin, but this is typical evasiveness.

Red pigment (*monhá*) has more of a decorative function. It is applied by men and women with great care. Applied in spots it is jaguar magic to protect infants, and applied crudely it is a protection of sorts against the *yau*.

It was never clear to me whether the love charm *pedidyá*, a blossom worn in the hair, was intended to work by magic or merely by suggestion. The most effective love potions, carefully safeguarded by the women even against the prying anthropologist, are secret and magical.

Among ceremonial objects the *behörü* is a rattle lance some three meters long with a hollow chamber at the top in which pebbles have been placed. It can bring rain, one informant said, but it was not used by the Cubeo for that purpose.

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